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If you really want to improve #healthcare and especially #mentalhealth in the new #Seniors #Housing #Unit....

January 31, 2021

STOP thinking in terms of "CUSTODIAL" staff and "MANAGEMENT" – think instead that ALL STAFF, ESPECIALLY CUSTODIAL STAFF, should be regarded as what they REALLY ARE, FRONTLINE MENTAL HEALTHCARE WORKERS.

This has never been better illustrated than during the present pandemic, as managers "work from home" (we know what that means) while custodial workers keep the virus at bay – and generally hold the fort.

The latter do all the really productive work of the place. While most people are still asleep, they are already at work, cleaning the halls and disinfecting the doors. Then an army of PSWs visit us in our units, clean and do laundry, prepare meals – and in are our only face-to-face contact with the world at large.

Edit Stats

Talk of LHIN and "Care Hubs" sounds almost hopelessly abstract to me, when it doesn't start with the above reailty, where healthcare for most of us begins and ends – now and in the future. Thinking otherwise really would be delusional.

Why worry too much about LHIN and so-called"Care Hubs"? Ideally, with CAMH's formerly "Archway" now "Downtown West" clinic barely a block away, we should already be benefitting from their services, lots of practical "hands-on" counselling, timely "streetwise" intervention preventing "elder-abuse" like "takeovers" and forms of exploitation of "mentally ill" and mad people by crooks. Ideally they would be helping all kinds of people in here, advocating for us. Ideally.... dream on! The hundreds of millions they skim from the public don't pan out into a positive presence in former Toronto Community Housing seniors buildings.

Better to think of how we can improve and fine-tune what we already have, and what to some degree – even with inadequate support – at least somewhat works.

EVERY staff member of a seniors building should receive training in mental health-care for seniors. I think the **Older Homeless Population Certificate Program** offered by the Toronto Hostels Training Centre would be very helpful. The issues it addresses, such as coping with mental health among homeless and marginally housed people, would be similar to what a worker might encounter in a seniors building run by Toronto. Eventually the Toronto Hostels Centre could develop a program specifically tailored to the workers and residents of the 83 buildings that comprise the Seniors Housing Unit. Staff would be on probation till successsful completion of the program within 2 years of getting hired, and preference would be given to candidates who already had the certificate. This would guarantee a greater sensitivity among staff to mental health issues among residents of seniors building and a greater competence at addressing things from loneliness to delusional thinking and suicidal ideation.

TORONTO HOSTELS TRAINING CENTRE
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Older Homeless Population Certificate Program (OHPCP)

For receipt of the OHPCP, candidates are required to take:

- the nine (9) pre-requisite training and workshops listed below;
- the two (2) mandatory workshops listed below; and
- a minimum of two (2) electives listed below

Pre-requisite Training & Workshops	Total Cost Member	Non- Member
1. Shelter Standards	$55	$65
2. Standard First Aid & CPR Two-Day Training	$105	$115
3. Crisis Prevention Two-Day Training - *please choose one from the following:*		
• Defusing Hostility	$95	$105
• Understanding & Managing Aggressive Behaviours (UMAB)	$95	$105
• CPI (must be a THTC member to obtain this training)	$105	- - - - -
4. Documentation Skills (Introduction or Advanced)	$80	$90
5. WHMIS GHS 2015	$70	$80
6. Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression (Introduction or Advanced)	$80	$90
7. Ethical Boundaries or Customer Service	$80	$90
8. Trans Inclusion Training or Inclusive Shelter Environments for LGBTQ2S People or Inclusive Shelter Environments for LGBTQ2S Youth	$80	$90
9. More than Just Ramps (Working with People who have Disabilities)	$30	$40

Mandatory Training & Workshops	Total Cost Member	Non- Member
1. Aging & Homelessness Part I: Changes and Challenges, Reality and Myths	$80	$90
2. Aging & Homelessness Part II: Advocacy, Counselling and Supporting	$80	$90

Electives – please choose a minimum of two (2) from the following	Total Cost Member	Non- Member
• Case Management (Introduction or Advanced)	$80	$90
• Conflict Resolution and Negotiation Skills (Introduction, Advanced or Supervisors/Managers)	$80	$90
• Harm Reduction	$80	$90
• Indigenous Cultural Competency Training	$80	$90
• Mental Health (Part I or Part II) or Youth Mental Health and Addictions	$80	$90
• Motivational Interviewing (Introduction or Advanced) or Counselling Skills (Introduction or Advanced)	$80	$90
• Trauma Informed Care (Part I or Part II)	$80	$90
• Substance Use (Introduction or Advanced)	$80	$90
• Mental Health in the Workplace or Mental Health First Aid or Psychological First Aid or Resiliency and Self-Care	$80	$90
• ASIST Two-Day Training / Suicide Intervention	$105	$115

I dwell on mental health because I think it's so crucial to the success or failure of this so called "integrated service" model – which appears to be at once too incomplete and too complicated to succeed. It's at present like a sophisticated hybrid mutation, potentially smarter than anything that precedes it, but deficient in respect of vital organs, vital signs, vitality period.

Meanwhile one of us is convinced that staff come into her unit for the express purpose of scratching her walker, a woman pounds on my door calling me by someone else's name (probably deceased) after I've given up trying to tell her my real name (and of course I don't open to her knowing that the gangsters down the hall put her up to it), a man shivers at the front door in sub-zero weather having lost his fob for the 3rd time this year (and the year is young), etc etc.... So far something here is definitey not working out....

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